

## **Water C.H.A.M.P. Fact Sheet**

- ★ The Water Conservation Hotel and Motel Program (Water C.H.A.M.P.) is a pilot project for the Pinellas-Anclote River Basin Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) that promotes water conservation in hotels and motels in Pinellas and southern Pasco counties. The program began in June 2002.
- ★ The District expanded Water C.H.A.M.P. into the Hillsborough, Alafia and Northwest Hillsborough basins beginning in June of 2003.
- ★ In 2005, the following expansion is planned for the program: Coastal, Manasota and Withlacoochee basins. The covered areas will include Citrus, Hernando, Manatee and Sarasota counties.
- ★ Hotel and motel owners, operators and management will be invited to participate in a "linens and towels reuse program." Participation in this program means the management agrees to launder linens every third day of a guest's stay unless the guest requests otherwise.
- ★ Participating hotels and motels will receive, free of charge, printed materials from Project Planet Corporation for a linens-and-towels reuse program, staff training materials and workshops, and an environmental self-audit checklist.
- ★ Besides saving a significant amount of water, hotels and motels can save up to \$1 per occupied room per day by participating in the program.
- ★ The District will also provide educational workshops on additional ways to save water to the hotels and motels involved in the program.
- ★ Guest comment cards will be distributed to each participating hotel and motel for the purpose of evaluating guest perception of the program.

## **Water C.H.A.M.P. Water Use Survey Results**

The Water Conservation Hotel and Motel Program (Water C.H.A.M.P.) was originally funded by the Pinellas-Anclote River Basin Board in February 2002 as a two-year program to promote water conservation in hotels and motels within the Basin. The program began in June 2002 and includes printed materials for a linens and towels reuse program, staff training materials and workshops, and an environmental self-audit checklist. The \$135,000 allocated for the two-year program includes printing costs, a professional evaluation and a temporary employee. To help support the program, Pinellas County Utilities conducted water use surveys on 17 participating Water C.H.A.M.P. hotels and motels. These surveys included on-site inspections and billing research. Billing for 2002 and 2003 was compared for each of the 17 properties surveyed. The average 3.7 percent increase in occupancy rates from 2002 to 2003 was taken into consideration.

Some of the key findings of those surveys follow:

- Savings result from a number of factors: implementation of the towels and linens reuse program, use of the self-audit checklist, participation in the toilet rebate program with Pinellas County Utilities, leak detection, education via workshops and participation in the water use survey.
- Because larger properties account for a greater number of rooms available and use more water than smaller properties, they offer greater opportunity for water savings and we should concentrate our efforts on these properties first.
- The survey participants realized a total savings of 16 million gallons a year (mg/yr). From those results, we can project that the 76 Pinellas-Anclote River Basin Water C.H.A.M.P. properties saved a total of 71 mg/yr.
- Based on Pinellas County water rates, that translates into a \$569,400 savings per year to participating hoteliers.

The program is called Water CHAMP, an acronym for the Water Conservation Hotel and Motel Program, which Swiftmud launched in Pinellas, Hillsborough and southern Pasco counties in 2002.

"All of this is to conserve our natural resources," said Carol Lee Wallis, president of TeamSpirit. "When you see what the results were down in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, it's really staggering."

According to Pinellas County Utilities, 17 participating hotels and motels saved 16-million gallons a year after implementing the program, which translated into a \$569,400 savings to the businesses. Those calculations took into account variations in hotel occupancy between 2002 and 2003, the years studied in the survey.

Water CHAMP provides free display materials to hotels and motels that participate in the program. Additionally, the program offers a self-audit checklist for hotels to ensure they are doing all they can to conserve money and energy. Training will be provided in subsequent workshops for housekeepers, maintenance people and groundskeepers, including a workshop on xeriscaping.

It also encourages county tourism agencies to promote those hotels as environmentally friendly. "If a visitor is looking for an environmentally conscious hotel, it would be noted," Roe said.

Frances Roberts, general manager at the Best Western Resort in Crystal River, said she thinks the program might be more useful to smaller establishments than chain hotels such as hers. She said she has already put in place many features of the program.

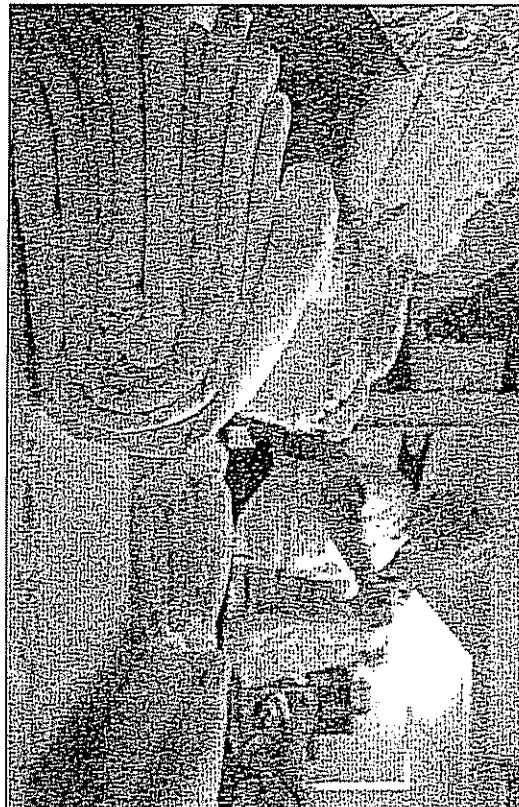
Others, she tried but didn't like. She said low-flow toilets can require additional flushes. Fluorescent lighting, intended to be more energy-efficient, interfered with television remote controls.

"I think this could be really beneficial to your nonaffiliated hotels, your mom-and-pops and some that aren't aware of this stuff," Roberts said. "I think it's a great idea, but I think it's something the hotel industry has been doing for years."

Amy Wimmer Schwarb can be reached at (352) 860-7305 or [wimmer@sptimes.com](mailto:wimmer@sptimes.com).

Bernice Forslund folds a sheet at the Central Motel in Inverness. The motel washes guests' sheets and towels every day, but under a Swiftmud program, the linen would be washed when guests checked out unless they requested it more often.

Times photo — RON THOMPSON



## Saving water has Hernando hotels, motels checking in

8/18/04 Hernando Times

■ A conservation program will offer displays, checklists and training so businesses can save water and money. It advocates xeriscaping and low-flow toilets.

By AMY WIMMER SCHWARB

Times Staff Writer

**CRYSTAL RIVER** — A new program that encourages hotels and motels to conserve water while saving money soon will be offered to business owners in Citrus and Hernando counties.

The program encourages water conserva-

tion efforts, from reusing towels and bed linens to installing low-flow toilets and shower heads. Training for maintenance, landscaping and housekeeping personnel are also provided through the program.

"The win-win part of it is they (the businesses) save money," said Melissa Roe, program coordinator for the Southwest Florida Water Management District, or Swiftmud.

Swiftmud is sponsoring the program, which is being implemented locally by the TeamSpirit marketing and event planning agency. Hotel, motel and bed and breakfast owners in Citrus and Hernando counties are invited to attend a kickoff workshop at 9 a.m. Sept. 15 at the Plantation Inn and Golf Resort in Crystal River.

Please see **WATER** Page 4

